


12. 211

*The comfortable Reflections, and glorious Prospects of
a distinguish'd Saint, at the Approach of Death.*

Exhibited in a
S E R M O N

Preach'd March 27. 1737.

Being the Lord's Day after the FUNERAL

Of that worthy and faithful Servant of CHRIST

Mr. Benjamin Wadsworth,

President of Harvard College.

By *Nathanael Appleton*, A. M.

Pastor of the Church of CHRIST in Cambridge.

*Isaiah xxxii. 17. And the Work of Righteousness
shall be Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness
Quietness and Assurance for ever.*

*Numb. xxiii. 10. Let me die the Death of the
Righteous, and let my last End be like his.*

B O S T O N : Printed for D. HENCHMAN. 1737.

2 E R M O N
Exhibited in a



President of Harvard College.

1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, A. M.
 2. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, A. M.

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Dr. R.

Reviving Thoughts in a Dying Hour.

2 Tim. IV. 6, 7, 8.

For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my Departure is at Hand.

*I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course,
I have kept the Faith.*

Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that Day: and not to me only, but unto all them that love his Appearing.

THIS Epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul, (in which he gives such an agreeable Account of himself) all agree was written from Rome to Timothy his beloved Son in the Faith. But whether it was the first, or the second Time of his going thither, and appearing before Cesar, is not so certain. A learned Expositor has in his Preface to this Epistle *, offered many considerable Arguments to prove that this was the first time of his being at Rome. But the Verses that I have now read, and some other Verses in

* Dr. Hammond.

Revolving Thoughts

this Epistle, together with the Postscript, have induced the generality of learned Men to conclude that it was written the last time he came thither, and when he had the near and certain Prospect of his Death.

But when this Epistle was written is not so much to my present Purpose, as the Things which are contained in the Verses now before us. And I think they may all be reduced to these three general Heads, viz.

I. The Apostle's Apprehension of himself with respect to his present State, namely that he was now upon the very brink of Death, expressed in those Words, *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my Departure is at Hand.*

II. His peaceful, and comfortable Reflection upon the past Conduct of himself in the Course of his Life, in those Words, *I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith.*

III. His pleasing Prospect, and joyful Expectation of what he and other Saints should meet with hereafter. *Thenceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that Day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his Appearing.*

And these are accordingly the three general Heads, which I propose for the Subject of our serious Meditation at this time.

I. I shall consider the Apostle's Apprehension of himself with respect to his present State, namely that he was now upon the very brink of Death.---*I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my Departure is at Hand.*

And as the Apostle is here plainly speaking of his Death; so what I would observe under this general Head, is,

1. The

1. The Account he gives of Death, or the Manner in which he describes it, viz. as an Offering, and a DEPARTURE.

2. The full Apprehension he had of the near Approach of his Death, or Departure; that he looked upon it to be at Hand, ready even then to come upon him.

3. The Calmness, the Easiness, and Freedom, with which he seems to speak or write of it.

1. Let us consider the Account the Apostle gives of Death, or the Manner in which he describes it, viz. as an Offering, and a Departure.

I am ready to be Offered, and my Departure; which refer to his Death. So then,

1. He calls it an Offering, or pouring out; for so it is in the Original, *I am now already poured out* †. It is observed to be the same Word that is used, for the Drink-Offerings under the Law, which were wont to be poured out. Hence the Word, in the Septuagint or Greek Translation for Drink-Offering; is derived from the same Word that the Apostle here useth ‡. And the Apostle, if he apprehended with what Death he should glorify God, might consider it as a sort of Sacrifice, not by way of Expiation or Atonement, (for there was a sufficiency of that for the greatest Sins, in the Sacrifice that Christ once made of himself) but in confirmation of the Truth of the Gospel which he bore Testimony to, and was now about to Seal with his Blood. Hence the Word is observed to refer to such Offerings as were for the Confirmation of some Covenant *. And the Apostle speaks in the same Dialect concerning his Death, to the *Philippians*, Ch. 2. 17. *If I be offered* (the same Word) upon the Sacrifice and Service of your Faith. Thus the Apostle, we may suppose, looks upon his Death in this View,

† ἡδὴ ἐκχυνόμενος. ‡ Numb. 28. 7. * Vid. Leigh, Cri. Sac.

even as an offering up of his Life to God ; and that he does this very freely and readily, considering what a Testimony he should hereby give, and what a Confirmation it would be of the Truth of the Gospel, that new Covenant of Grace, which he had been preaching to the World, ever since his Conversion to the christian Faith.

But then, if we consider the *Word*, according to the literal Meaning of it, viz. *a pouring forth* ; it may serve to give us some Idea of Death, which is the *pouring forth* of Life. For the Life goes forth at Death ; and in a sudden and violent Death, it may be said to be poured out, in a full continued Stream ; and not by Drops, as in a lingering Death. Thus the Blood, which is called the Life of the Beast, was to be poured out † ; when the Beast was killed for Sacrifice, or for Food. And it was prophesied concerning Christ, that he should pour out his Soul unto Death ‡.

2. The Apostle according to the common Translation, here speaks of Death as a *Departure*. *My Departure is at Hand.*

And Death may very properly be called a *Departure*. For at Death the Soul departs ; it departs from the Body, and takes its leave of it for the present. Moreover, Life, Sense, and Motion, all depart from the Body ; and leave it a lifeless senseless Carcass, at Death. Nay the Body itself departs at Death. The present Form and Visage of the Face depart, then *his Beauty consumes away like a Moth* * ; yea *his Countenance is changed, and he is sent away* ‡. And the Body becomes such a loathsome Spectacle, that the dearest Friends are con-

† Deut. xii 16. || Isaiah liii 12. * Psalm xxxix. 11.
‡ Job 14. 20.

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cerned to have it removed and buried out of their Sight, not to appear any more till the Resurrection. It is a Departure, as the Man at Death departs from his present House and Home to the Grave, *that House appointed for all the Living. For the Wind passeth over him and he is gone, and the Places that knew him shall know him no more **. At Death the Man departs from his present Friends and Company, and instead of being among the Living to Praise God, he is gone to the Congregation of the Dead. He departs also from the present Business and Employments of Life, to the Place of Silence and Inactivity; from the Hurries and Cares and Labours of this Life, to the Grave, where there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom. Furthermore, he *departs* from his present Possessions and Enjoyments; for at Death we leave all behind us, to those that come after us. *Naked came we out of our Mother's Womb, and naked shall we return thither †*. Moreover, he *departs* from his present Sorrows and Sufferings; and if he be a good Man, to that Place where the Wicked cease from troubling, and where the Weary be at rest; where he rests from his Labours, and his Works follow him. In a Word, He departs out of this World; for as our Birth is our Entry into it, so our Death is the Going out of it, so as to have no more to do with it. We go off the Stage, we make our Exit, and appear no more to act any other Part upon it. Thus Death is a *Departure*.

But then the Word † translated a *Departure* is observed to signify more properly a *Dissolution*. And this will serve to give us a further Notion of Death; for it may truly be said of Death that

* Psalm ciii. 16. † Job i. 21. † ἀναλυστος.

it is a Dissolution. It dissolves the vital Union of Soul and Body. That close and intimate Union that there has been of the essential Parts of our Constitution is broken by Death, so that their Relation to, and Dependance upon each other, for their Sensations or Perceptions, are entirely over for the present. One Part is returned or returning to the Dust as it was, while the other is gone to God that gave it.

Moreover, If we consider the Body by it self, Death is the Dissolution of it. For in Life there is a close & regular Connection of the several Parts of the Body, whereby they have a near Relation to, and a Dependance and Influence upon each other, which Conjunction, and Connection of the Parts is in the Time of Life preserved by the Laws of Adhesion and Attraction, or some other Way of the Creator that we know nothing about ; which at Death begins to dissolve. Then the wonderful Structure of the humane Body begins to fall to pieces, and this Master-piece of the lower Creation, even all the Members and Organs of the Body that were so curiously wrought in the lowest Parts of the Earth, loose their Form, Situation and Contexture, and dissolve at length into the same kind of Dust out of which Man was formed at first, without any more Form, Connection or Dependance one upon another, than the common Sand or Dust with which it is intermingled. *Dust thou art, and unto Dust shalt thou return, Gen. iii. 19.*

2. I come now to consider, *The full Apprehension the Apostle had of the near Approach of his Death, or Departure ; that he looked upon it to be just at Hand, and ready even then to come upon him.*

I am now ready to be offered, and my Departure is at Hand. What particular Reason the Apostle had

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had to think so, we are not told. An ecclesiastical Historian * tells us from the Fathers, that God revealed to him, that his Death was approaching, some Time before this ; and that he should suffer Martyrdom at Rome, which caused him to hasten with Joy to the Place. And considering that the Holy Ghost witnessed in every City, of the Bonds and Afflictions that he should meet with † ; it is no Wonder if he should give him some Notice of his Death, that finishing Stroke of his Sufferings, some Time before-hand. But whether this be so or no, yet if this was the last Time of his being at Rome, he was in close Imprisonment, and he might at the Time of his Writing this Epistle be under a Sentence of Death, at least within himself, which he might argue from the Cruelty and Rage of that bloody Tyrant Nero, the roman Emperor, and the fierce Persecution he was now engaged in against the Christians ; and so it proved, for in that Persecution, and towards the latter End of that Reign, he was beheaded, and Peter crucified in Rome ; and as is generally agreed, on the same Day.

And as the blessed Apostle had Notice and Warning of his Death, some how or other, before-hand, so it has been with others, they have had some Revelation or Intimations of their Death, some Time before it has come upon them. Thus Aaron had express Notice of his Death, when Moses was ordered to take him, and Eliezer his Son to Mount Hor ; and told him that Aaron should be gathered unto his People, and die there ||. And Moses himself had it revealed unto him, that he should go up and die at Mount Nebo ‡. And Elijah's Translation was revealed before-hand, not only to him,

* Echard † Acts xx. 23. || Numb. xx. 25, 26.
‡ Deut. xxxii. 49.

but to *Elifka*, and to the *Sons of the Prophets*, who ask'd *Elifka* whether he knew that the Lord would take away his Master from his Head that Day? To which he replies, *that he knew it* †.

And altho' these are extraordinary Instances, and the most common Case is that of good old *Isaac*, who knew not the Day of his Death. That is, not the very Day, nor particular Time that Life will come to an End; yet God in his Providence oftentimes gives fair Intimations to Men that their Departure is at Hand. This is the Case of those that are of an advanced Age, and have the Decays of Nature growing apace upon them. This is also the Case of such as are seized with mortal Sicknesses, and under uncontrollable Languishments; for when such Distempers prevail, notwithstanding all the Means used for the Removal of them; they give fair Intimations that our Dissolution approaches, and that the Time of our Departure is at hand.

3. What I proposed further to observe under this first general Head was, *The Calmness, Easiness and Freedom with which he speaks of his Death or Departure*, which he apprehended to be at hand.

And by what follows in my Text it appears that he was not under any Ruffle or Perplexity of Mind, at his Thinking or Writing of his Death. The realizing Thought of Death, or of its being just at hand, was no Surprise to him. He had been in Deaths oft, yea he as it were died daily; he had been expecting and waiting for it, and the News of its Approach instead of stirring up any Fear or Terror, it afforded Matter of Rejoycing to him, and he was ready to bid it welcome. He tells us

† 2 Kings ii. 3.

in his Epistle to the *Philippians*, Chap. i. 23. That he had a *Desire to depart, and to be with Christ*; which was far better than to be here. And he held steadily of the same Mind, now he saw Death approaching, and coming in good earnest. The *Jeopardy he was in every Hour*, had made Death very familiar to him; and it seemed to be no more to him than to fall asleep; for so he calls it, *a Sleep in Jesus*. And as to what followed after Death, that was a Joy rather than any Fear to him, considering the Promises and the Prospects which the Gospel afforded him.

And now this is the happy Privilege of some others of the eminent Saints and faithful Servants of Jesus Christ; that Death ceases to be *the King of Terrors* unto them, and the near, yea the immediate Prospects of it, are no Surprise to them. Nay, some who *through fear of Death have all their Lifetime been subject to Bondage*, yet when Death has actually drawn near, and they have seen themselves a going, all their Fears have been scattered, and they have been able to say with the Psalmist, Psalm xxiii. 4. *Yea, though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no Evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy Staff they comfort me.*

But now, what was it that afforded such Calmness and Comfort to the Apostle under the Apprehensions of Death? Why, it was the Reflection he had upon his past Conduct; and so the lively Views and certain Prospect of the Glory and Happiness that follow after Death and the Judgment. Which leads me to the other general Heads I proposed to consider, and which lye so obvious in my Text.

So then,

II. Let us consider, *The peaceful and comfortable Reflection of the Apostle upon his Conduct, in the Time*

Time past of his Life : especially since he was converted to the Faith of Christ ; Namely, *That he had fought the good Fight, that he had finished his Course, and kept the Faith.*

The holy Apostle being come to the Close of Life; he looks back upon what was past, to see how he had managed, and behaved himself in the World.

And what can be more proper, than for a Man when he is just finishing the Scene of Life, to take a Review of the several Parts of it, and see how he has managed himself : Whether he has answered the great End of Living, or frustrated the grand Design of his Being ? Whether his Life has been to any good Purpose, to the Honour of God and for the Good of others, as well as for the furthering his own Salvation ? Whether he has lived as the Grace of God has taught him ? This is necessary for a Man in order to the removing his Fears of Death, and settling his Hopes and Expectations of a future Glory upon a good Foundation. For as we have behaved our selves in this World, so may we expect it will fare with us in the World that is to come. For here we stand Probationers for the eternal State, and we shall receive of our righteous Judge *according to the Things done in the Body, whether they have been good, or whether they have been evil,* 2 Cor. viii. 10.

And now the Apostle upon a serious, thorough and impartial Review of his past Life, was able to give a good Account of it, which gave him such a Calm in the near Prospect, and such Courage in the very Hour of Death. He had this for his Rejoycing, even the Testimony of his Conscience that he had fought the good Fight, that he had finished his Course, and that he had kept the Faith.

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1. *He had fought the good Fight.*

Here is an Allusion (as is supposed) to the grecian or roman Games, in which there were Fightings, as well as *Wrestlings* and *Racings*; and so he had engaged in the christian Combat: He had list- ed under Christ's Banner, and waged War with the Enemies and Opposers of Christianity; and had fought manfully under the Captain of his Salvation: had endured Hardness, as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ: He conflicted with great Difficulties, & patiently suffered the sharpest Persecutions, & all Manner of Hardships, short of Death, & now was going to suffer that, for the Cause of Christ & of his Gospel. And what a long Catalogue of his Sufferings does he give us in 2 Cor. xi. 23, --- 27. *In Labours more abundant, in Stripes above measure, in Prisons more frequent, in Deaths oft, in Perils of Waters, in Perils of Robbers, in Perils by my own Countrymen, in Perils by the Heathen, in Perils in the City, in Perils in the Wilderness, in Perils in the Sea, in Perils among false Brethren; in Weariness and Painsfulness, in Watchings often, in Hunger and Thirst, in Fastings often, in Cold and Nakedness.* But he surmounted these Difficul- ties, overcame all these Oppositions; and came off a Conquerer, yea, more than a Conquerer, through Christ that loved him.

And now, altho' we have not in all Respects the same Enemies to fight against, nor such Difficulties and Dangers to encounter, no such fierce Opposi- tions and Persecutions from the civil Power, who were at that Time the professed Enemies of Christ; yet there is, as we are told, Job vii. 1. according to the marginal Reading, *a Warfare to Man upon Earth*; and a good Fight which we must be able to say we have fought, if we would have Peace and Comfort in a dying Hour. There are spiritual, and fleshly, and worldly Lusts, (all which war a- gainst

gainst the Soul) for us to fight with. There are also the Examples of the Wicked, the Enticements of Sinners, and the corrupt Customs of the World, and our own evil Habits, to oppose and conquer ; and last of all, there is our *Adversary the Devil, who as a roaring Lyon, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.*

And we must be able to say that we have waged and carried on a War with these our Enemies, that we have been fighting with them, that we have resisted and overcome them. We must be able to say, that by the Grace of Christ, *we have crucified the Flesh, with all it's Affections and Lusts ;* that we have watched & guarded against the Snares of the World, and have by Faith gain'd the Victory over it, so as in a good Measure to get above the Hopes or Fears, the Frowns or Flatteries of it. And that we resist the Devil, so as to cause him to flee from us. In a Word, We are so to fight and struggle with our Lusts, and all our spiritual Enemies, as to come to such a Pass, that no Iniquity has the Dominion over us.

But then,

2. The Apostle *finished his Course,* or run his Race. Alluding still to the Isthmian & Olympick Games. And what he here informs us concerning himself was, that notwithstanding all the Difficulties and Dangers, and Oppositions in his Way; yet he kept on his Course, diligently, steddily, vigorously and perseveringly, even unto the End.

The Holy Ghost had witnessed *in every City, that Bonds and Afflictions waited for him ;* but says he, with a noble Courage and Resolution, becoming an Apostle, *None of these Things move me, neither count I my Life dear unto my self, so that I might finish my Course with Joy, and the Ministry I have received of the Lord Jesus,* Acts xx. 23, 24.

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The Apostle had a Race to run, as a Christian, and as a Minister; and in both these Respects he finished his Course; that is, he faithfully discharged the Duties which the Gospel required of him, as a Christian, and as an Apostle. He had the Testimony of his Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, he had his Conversation in the World; and that he had exercised himself to have a Conscience void of Offence, towards God and towards Men, carefully attending all the Duties of the christian Life.

And then as an Apostle he went abroad faithfully publishing the Gospel of Christ, from City to City, and from one Country to another People, even to every Place that the Holy Ghost signified to him that he should go unto. And a great Race indeed in this Respect did he run; and it would take a longer Time, than I have at present, only to reckon up the Voyages and Travels of this great Apostle. And altho' he speaks humbly of himself, as the least of the Apostles, and not meet to be called an Apostle, because he persecuted the Church of God; yet he declares at the same time, that he laboured more abundantly than they all, by the Grace of God that was with him *. And by his abundant Labours, and by his superiour Learning, and extraordinary Gifts, there was a universal Resort to him; in so much, that as he says, *The Care of all the Churches came upon him daily* ||. And notwithstanding that *Thorn in the Flesh*, which is supposed by many, to be some bodily Weakness; yet he went on steddily, through the whole Course of his Ministry and Service, preaching Christ, warning & teaching every Man, --- striving according to his Working, which wrought in him mightily †. And agreeable to this,

* 1 Cor. xv. 9, 10. || 2 Cor. xi. 28. † Col. i. 28, 29

He appeals to the Elders of the Church of Ephesus, when he took his Leave of them, for his Fidelity, Constancy and Diligence in the Service of Christ, and of their Souls. Acts xx. 18, --- 27. *To know after what Manner I have been with you at all Seasons, serving the Lord with all Humility of Mind, and with many Tears and Temptations, --- and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have skewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from House to House, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, Repentance towards God, & Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore I take you to record this Day, that I am pure from the Blood of all Men; for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the Counsel of God.*

And as the blessed Apostle, so every Christian has a Race to run, a Course to finish, if he would finish his Life with Peace, and receive a Crown hereafter. There are all the Duties of the christian Life, even those of Piety, Justice and Charity, which may be considered as the christian Race; so that for us to run the christian Race, is to live as the Gospel, and the Grace of God teaches us, which is to deny Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts; and to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present World†. And to finish this Course, is to persevere in Well-doing to the End, to continue Faithful unto the Death. It is as the Apostle expresses it, * to run with Patience, or Perseverance, the Race that is set before us.

In short, for I can only hint at Things, to run our Race, and finish our Course, is to set out in the Ways of Christianity; to consider the Duties of every Station and Relation, of every Circumstance and Condition of Life; and to go on in the sincere,

† Tit. ii. 11, 12.

‡ Heb. xii. 1.

diligent and steady Practice of them. It is to run the Way of God's Commandments, and not suffer our selves to be diverted out of it, or hindered from going on in it. It is to run without being Weary, to walk without Fainting. It is to hold on our Way, yea, and to wax stronger and stronger. In a Word, It is to be always abounding in the Work of the Lord.

3. The Apostle had this Testimony, that *he had kept the Faith.*

Which intends either,

1. That he kept the *Profession* of his Faith.

He was not so terrified by the Enemies of Christ, nor at the Rage and Fury of his cruel Persecutors; but that in the midst of Danger, & Death, he openly and courageously professed Christ, and his holy Religion. And notwithstanding the Contempt and Reproaches that were cast upon Christ, and even the Scandal of the Cross; yet he was not ashamed to own him before Men. And altho' the Cross, that is the Sufferings & ignominious Death of Christ were to the Jews a *Stumbling-block*, and to the Greeks *Foolishness*; yet he glories in nothing more than in the Cross of Christ, he being to them who are called the *Power of God, and the Wisdom of God* †. And amidst all the Trials and Temptations to the contrary, he held fast the *Profession of his Faith, without Waver- ing.*

Or,

2. It may intend his keeping the *Doctrine* of Faith, or of the Gospel.

And this he kept, as he constantly maintained the Truth of it against all Gainsayers. And as he propagated the Gospel, by his Preaching, & by his Epistles; so he confirmed the same, not only with the

† 1 Cor. i. 23, 24.

strongest Reasonings; but by divers Signs and Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost. He made full Proof of his Ministry, preaching the Word in *Demonstration of the Spirit, and with Power.*

But then,

3. Some understand the *Grace of Faith* here.

And so he kept the Faith, as he continued his Faith and Trust in God, and in the Lord Jesus Christ. He believed on him with all his Heart. He accepted of Christ as his only Saviour, and looked for Deliverance from all Condemnation only in and through him; believing as he said, *That there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.* He looked for Justification, not from his own Righteousness; but from the free Grace of God, *through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ.* He depended also upon him, for all Grace and spiritual Strength, that he stood in need of; acknowledging that it was *through Christ strengthening him, he could do all Things*; and that of himself he was not sufficient so much as for a good Thought. In a Word, he gives this Account of himself, Gal. ii. 20. *I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the Life which I now live in the Flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

And he kept this Faith, continued in it firm and steady to the End; and he grew strong in it, whereby he gave Glory to God, and gained a Victory over the World; and when Death it self approached, it did by no Means fail; but he triumphed over all the Fears and Terrors of it, *knowing in whom he had believed.*

And now we must thus *keep the Faith.* We must continue in our Profession of Christ, and of his Gospel. We must continue in a firm and unshaken Belief of the Gospel, *the Faith that was once deliver-*

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ed to the Saints. And we must, as we believe in God, believe also in Christ. And we must watch and pray, that our Faith fail not; and must resolve that nothing shall discourage, or break us off from our Faith in him; that altho' he slay us, yet we will trust in him. We must trust in him at all Times, and in the Shadow of his Wings, we must make our Refuge. We must trust to the Merits of his Obedience & Death, to the Prevalency of his Intercession, to the Richness and Freeness of divine Grace; and we must be influenced by such a Faith, to all Love, Holiness and Obedience; and must continue in such a Faith, even unto the Death, if we would receive the End of our Faith, the Salvation of our Souls.

And thus I have gone through the second general Head, even the Apostle's Reflection upon the past Conduct of himself, in the Course of his Life; and happy he, and happy every Man, that upon an impartial Review of his Life, is able to give such a Testimony of it; *That he has fought the good Fight, finished his Course, and kept the Faith.*

III. I proceed to consider the last general Head, viz. *The joyful Expectation which the Apostle had of what he should meet with hereafter, viz A Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge would give him at that Day; and not to him only, but to them also that love his Appearing.*

The Apostle was upon the Brink of both Worlds. He had passed thro' this World, & was leaving it; and was just entering upon the Borders of the other. And as with one Eye, he looks back to see what he had done, how he had behaved in his past Life; so with the other, he looks forward to see what he was to receive in the future. And as he had the Testimony of his Conscience, as to his past Life; so he had

had most joyful Expectations in the Life that was to come. Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, &c. He argues with himself, that since he had fought the good Fight, and finished his Course so well; all which remained now, was to receive the Crown of Righteousness. Here he seems to carry on the Allusion to the ancient Games, and proceeds in the agonistick Style. For as the Victors, in those Combats or Racings, received a Laurel, a Crown upon their Winning it, according to the Rules of those Games; which was given to them by one appointed to judge and determine whether they had won it, or no: So the Apostle having fought the Good Fight, and run his Race, he is assured, that there is a glorious Crown laid up for him, which the righteous Judge would give him at that Day, and not to him only, but to them also that love his Appearing. He had the Testimony of his Conscience, that he had acted his Part well; and so doubted not, but that he had the Approbation of his Judge; and all he expected now was to receive the Token of it, in the glorious Crown before him. Here are several Things proper to be taken notice of, with some Enlargement, was there Time for it.

As,

1. The Name he gives to that Reward, he says was laid up for him, viz. *A Crown of Righteousness.*

Crowns are set upon the Heads of Emperors and Kings in Token of their regal Dignity, and Power, and Glory; accordingly a Crown is an Emblem or Token of very high Honour and Dignity; so that when the Apostle says, there was laid up for him a Crown, it was as much as to say, that he had by a patient Continuance in Well-doing, been seeking for Glory, Honour and Immortality. He believed it was laid up for him, and that he should receive it. He expected all those Marks of Honour and Glory which

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which would be conferred upon such whom the King of Heaven delighted to honour. And hence, sometimes it is called a *Crown of Glory*, and a *Crown of Life* †. But here he calls it, a *Crown of Righteousness*. By which we are to understand, either,

1. *That Righteousness would be his Crown.*

And as Righteousness and true Holiness was the Glory with which our Nature was crowned, and adorned at first; (this being a great Part of the Image of God upon the Soul of Man) so it will most certainly be the special and peculiar Glory of the Saints in Heaven; that they are made perfect in Holiness.

Or,

2. By a *Crown of Righteousness* may be intended, a Crown purchased and procured by the Righteousness of Jesus Christ; even by his Obedience and Death, which has unbarred the Gates of Heaven, and opened all the Glory and Happiness thereof unto us, and made Way for our obtaining it, by Virtue thereof.

Or,

3. *The Rewards of Righteousness.*

A Reward to be bestowed upon righteous Men. For as the Psalmist says, Psal. lvi. 11. *Verily, there is a Reward for the Righteous.* And that in keeping the Commandments, *there is a great Reward*, Psalm xix. 11. Which Reward is not to be reckoned of Debt, but of Grace.

Or,

4. By the Crown's being called a *Crown of Righteousness*, we may understand, that Glory and Happiness which of Right belongs to all the Saints, according to the Tenor of the Gospel-Covenant.

For altho' it be a Reward not of Debt, but of free Grace; yet by Virtue of the Covenant, and Promises of the Gospel, to which the Saints are intitled; it may be called a Reward, or a Crown of

† 1 Peter v. 4. James i. 12.

Righteousness. For God of his free Grace, has by his Word & Promise, transferred a *Right* to them. Hence it is said to the Apostle *John*, Rev. xxii. 14. *Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life.*

But which Way soever we understand the Apostle, it comes to the same Thing; for that which is intended by it, is the Glory and the Happiness of the other World, that will be conferred upon all the sincere Saints, and faithful Servants of Jesus Christ.

2. It is worthy of our Remark, from whom the Apostle expected to receive this Reward, this Crown of Righteousness; namely, from the Lord, the righteous Judge.

That is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is constituted the Judge of the World; the Son of God, to whom the Father hath given Authority to execute Judgment, because he is the Son of Man *. And he is a righteous Judge: For unto the Son, he saith, *Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a Scepter of Righteousness, is the Scepter of thy Kingdom* ||.

And this was he whom the Apostle believed in with all his Heart, had preached to the World, had faithfully served; and laid himself out with most indefatigable Diligence, to promote his Interest, and advance his Honour. From him, I say, it was that the Apostle expected to receive a glorious Reward.

And how great and glorious a Crown may we suppose him to expect from such a plentiful Rewarder; considering how ardently he loved him, how faithfully he served him, how much he denied himself for his Sake, what Sufferings he had already

* John v. 27.

|| Heb. i. 8.

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endured; and considering that he was now about to lay down his Life in his Cause?

3. We may consider the *Manner* in which he expected to receive this Crown, viz. *By Way of Gift. Which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me.*

Altho' he had been so faithfully serving Christ, and was now ready to die for him, rather than deny him. And altho' he expected a very glorious Reward, yet he has no Apprehension of Merit in all this. He don't look upon himself as having merited the least of what he expected. For if he was a distinguish'd Saint, yet he knew who it was that made him to differ; and *that it was by the Grace of God that he was what he was*: and that if he laboured more abundantly than the other Apostles, *it was not HE, but the Grace of God that was with him* †. And as he looked upon all he had already, as what he had received freely from God; so what he expected further, he looked upon as a free Gift; not what he had merited by all his Services and Sufferings, but what would be freely given him. Indeed he looks for it, as what was promised and secured to him by the Gospel-Covenant; but not as what his Services had merited. And so the Apostle distinguisheth between the Rewards of Sin, and the Rewards of Righteousness: One he calls Wages, the other a Gift. *The Wages of Sin is Death: but the Gift of God is eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord* †.

4. We may observe the *Time* when he expected to receive this Crown, viz. *At that Day*; which is the Day of Judgment.

† 1 Cor. xv. 10. † Rom. vi. 23.

For altho^o the Apostle in other Places speaks of his being present with the Lord, when absent from the Body †; and of his desiring to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better † than to be here: Yet the Crown of Righteousness, the Completion of his Happiness, which he expects from the righteous Judge, is at that Day; viz. that Day when the righteous Judge shall appear to judge the World. We are told, Acts xvii. 31. That God hath appointed A DAY in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained. And it is called that Day ||; and the Judgment of the great Day*. Accordingly that is the Time represented in Scripture, when the Rewards of Glory shall be given to the Saints. This the Apostle Peter, to encourage the Elders to be faithful in feeding the Flock of God, assures them; that when the chief Shepherd shall appear, that is at the Judgment, they should receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away †. So that it is when the chief Shepherd and Judge shall appear to judge the World, that Peter and Paul, and all the Apostles expected to receive a Crown of Righteousness, and a Crown of Glory. He was full in the Belief of the Resurrection of the Body, of the Judgment to come, and of the future State; and died in the confident Expectation hereof; believing there was a Crown laid up for him, which at the Resurrection of the Just and the Judgment that follows upon it, he should receive. And this Faith, in some good Degree, have all the Saints. And this leads me,

5 To observe, The full Perswasion and confident Expectation the Apostle had of receiving this glorious Crown.

† 1 Cor. v. 8. † Phil. i. 23. || 2 Tim. i. 12. * Jude 6. † 1 Per. v. 4.
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He speaks of it with an Assurance; *Henceforth, there IS laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge WILL give me.* He was fully perswaded of this, there was no Doubt or Uncertainty remaining in his Mind about the Matter; but he seems to be well assured of it, as the Racers were of the Laurel, or the Crown they saw hung up at the End of the Race. And with such sure and certain Hopes, with such strong and lively Prospects of a glorious Crown; he is enabled to receive the Messages of Death with all Calmness and Courage, has all his natural Fears of Death scattered, and with Pleasure thinks of his Departure, which was so near at Hand.

And this is the happy Privilege of some of God's eminent Saints and Servants: They have such clear Evidences of their being in a State of Grace, and such Assurances of there being a Crown of Glory laid up for them; that they can, not only die in Peace, but are able even to rejoyce at such a Time, in Hope of that Glory there is now reserved in Heaven for them, and shall in due Time be revealed in them.

6 Let me further observe, *The pleasing Thought* the Apostle had at this Time, with Respect to the *Salvation and Happiness of others*, as well as his own.

Was he so Selfish as to think and please himself with the Thoughts of a Crown of Righteousness and Glory for none but himself? Was he for monopolizing the Glory and Happiness of Heaven, as some Men would the Riches and Honours of the present World? No, but pleased himself with the Thought that this World would be the happy Lot and Portion of all true Believers, as well as of himself. *And not to me only, but to them also that love*

his Appearing. He did not look upon the Crown as belonging only to him, or as if he was the only one that should receive a Reward ; but that others, even all that loved the Appearance of Christ, should be Partakers with him in the future Glory and Felicity.

And here is the Difference between those that run the christian Race, and the Racers among the Grecians or Romans : For in their Racings, there was but one that gained the Prize ; altho' many ran, and strove for it. *Know ye not that they which ran in a Race, run all, but one receiveth the Prize † ?* Whereas in the christian Race, all that run with Patience and Perseverance, shall obtain the Prize, the Crown of eternal Life. And this Thought, instead of being any Abatement of his Pleasure, was a great Addition to it : It pleased him that others should be as surely, and as gloriously rewarded as he ; according to their Services and Faith.

He had his Soul enlarged in Love to his Fellow-Creatures ; he wished, and prayed, and longed, and laid himself out to the utmost, for their Conversion and Salvation. He tells us, Rom. x. 1. *That it was his Heart's Desire and Prayer to God for Israel, that they might be saved.* And so earnest & ardent were his Desires for the Salvation of his People, as to carry him beyond Bounds, and to express himself in such an hyperbolical Manner, (as is thought) in Rom. ix. 3. *I could wish that my self were accursed, or separated, from Christ, for my Brethren my Kinsmen according to the Flesh.* And how solicitous was he, that they and others, might believe and be saved ? In so much, that he even travailed in Birth that Christ might be formed in them ‡. He preach-

† 1 Cor. ix. 24.

‡ Gal. 4. 19.

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ed, he taught, he warned, he exhorted every Man, in all Wisdom, labouring and striving according to the Power and Grace of God given to him; and what was it for? but that he might present every Man perfect in Christ Jesus †. And well might he think of it with Pleasure; that not only he, but that all true Believers should receive such unfading Crowns of Glory from the Lord their righteous Judge.

And this is the Temper of every true Saint: Their Souls are not only elevated into a supreme Love of God, but enlarged in a sincere and fervent Charity to all the Saints; and it will please every Saint to think that others will, as well as they receive those Marks of divine Honour, and Favour; and that they shall join together, even innumerable Companies of Saints and Angels, in shouting forth the Praises of God, and the Lamb for ever and ever.

7. I have but one Word more to add here; and that is, the Apostle's Description of those for whom this Crown of Righteousness was laid up, as well as for himself, viz. *Such as love his Appearing.*

There is the Appearing of the Lord, the righte- Judge, before mentioned. So that one Part of the Character of a true Christian, of one that is intitled to a Crown, is that he loves the Appearance of Jesus Christ to Judgment. As for the Hypocrite, and the Sinner, he dreads the Appearance of him. What a Terror is it to such to think of Appearing before him, whose Eyes are as a Flame of Fire, who searches the Hearts, and tries the Reins of the Children of Men, that he may render to every Man according to his Works; before whom all Things are open

† Col. i. 28.

and naked, and who will judge the Secrets of Men. For such can't but be apprehensive of the Shame and Confusion that will cover them when they appear before his inlightened Tribunal, & shall have all their Sins, even their most secret Wickedness, laid open to the World; and they shall have the Reward of their Deeds rendred to them.

But now the real Christian whose Conscience can testify for him with the blessed Apostle, that he had fought the good Fight, &c. or can appeal to God with good Haniel, saying, Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in Truth, and with a perfect Heart, and done that which is good in thy Sight †. I say such will love and rejoyce at the Appearing of Jesus Christ. He will be glad there is a Day coming wherein he may give up his Account to God, if his Conscience tells him, that he has glorified God on Earth, and finished the Work that he had given him to do. Glad that there will be an Opportunity to vindicate himself of the ill Thoughts, the hard Speeches and Reproaches that have been cast upon him; to have his Sincerity and Uprightness, his Fidelity and Diligence in the Service of Christ, acknowledged and approved by his Judge; and to receive the blessed Engage to his Immortal Honour before the World.

Thus every true Christian has Reason to love the Appearing of Jesus Christ; for when he who is their Life shall appear, they also shall appear with him in Glory ‡.

And thus I have hastily gone over my Text, and the Subject was too large and copious to do any thing more than hint at Things, in the Compass of Time allowed me. And what I now hasten to is the

† 2 Kings xx. 3. ‡ Col. iii. 4.

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And here I shall only mention two or three Inferences, that are the most obvious, and will be most agreeable to the present Occasion.

Infer. I. What an unspeakable Mercy is it, since there is a Necessity of Dying; that there is any thing to support and comfort us under the certain Prospects and near Approaches of it.

Death in it self considered is an awful Change, and carries a great deal of Terror along with it. Nature abhors and relacts at a Dissolution. It is a very affecting Thing to go off the Stage of Life, and pass into a State of Silence, and Inactivity. It is a very melancholly Thing to take the final Leave of our Families and Friends, our Possessions, and Enjoyments; & to leave the Places that now know us, to know us no more forever.

And if we are utterly in the Dark as to our future State, it must needs be very perplexing to the Mind. But, O what Distress must the Man be in, who has no better a Prospect before him, but that of a miserable Eternity! That when Death approaches, and when all worldly Prospects fail; that there should nothing remain to him, but a fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation to devour him!

But now what an unspeakable Mercy do the Saints enjoy; that they have such Cordials, such Supports & Comforts, at the Approaches of Death, as the Testimony of their Consciences, the Witness of God's Spirit, the Light of his Countenance, and the Joy of his Salvation? Such sure and certain Prospects of a blessed Eternity, that instead of being surprized or terrified at Death, it is Matter of Joy

Joy to them, and instead of shrinking back at the Approach of it, they are able to welcome the King of Terrors, and in holy Triumph, to say with the Apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 55, 56. *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory? The Sting of Death is Sin; and the Strength of Sin is the Law. But Thanks be to God, which giveth us the Victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Infer. II. We learn, That it is the Testimony of a good Conscience, with Respect to our past Carriage and Conduct in the World, that will afford solid Comfort in a dying Hour.

It was *this* that enabled the Apostle, to think, and speak, and write so calmly of Death; and to please himself with the confident Expectation of a future Reward. And it is only such a Testimony of Conscience for us, that will take away the Terror, and the Sting of Death: And truly without this, it is impossible for us to have any Peace at the Approach of Death. What Peace or Comfort can that Man have who is conscious to himself, that he has lived in the Neglect of God, and of his Duty to him; of his being unjust in his Dealings, unfaithful to his Trust, unkind, unchaste or intemperate in his Life? How will such a guilty Soul be filled with Distress & Terror at the Approach of Death, knowing that this will open the Scene of eternal Wo and Misery unto him?

Whereas such as upon the closest, and most impartial Reflection upon themselves, can say they *have fought the good Fight*; that they have waged War with all their Spiritual Enemies; and have through the Grace and Strength of Christ gotten the Mastery of them; that they have run their christian Race with Patience; that they hold fast the Profession, and the Exercise of their Faith with-

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out Wavering, they will have a sure Foundation for Peace and Comfort in the Hour of Death: For what can do a Man any Hurt that is in such a Case? God and Christ are for him; the Gospel, and all the exceeding great and precious Promises thereof, are on his Side; and then, who or what can be against him.

So that it is according as our Consciences testify for, or against us; that we shall have Hope or Fear, Joy or Sorrow, in a dying Hour. For if our Hearts condemn us, God is greater than our Heart, and knoweth all Things. But if our Heart condemn us not, then may we have Confidence towards God †.

Infer. III. How safe and happy must the true Christian needs be in Death; since there is a Crown of Righteousness laid up for him, which the Lord the righteous Judge will give him at the Day of his Appearing.

Well might the Apostle say, *that to die was Gain* ||, since that was the Way to a glorious Crown; and it is through the dark Valley of the Shadow of Death, that all the Saints do ascend to Glory. That Man who while he lives, lives to the Lord, and when he dies, dies in the Lord; who can take away his Crown? It is secured to him by the Power, and by the Promises of God, *all which are in Christ yea, and in him Amen.* Wherefore we may all write, as in Rev. xiv. 13. *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.*

And now, this we have Reason to think was the happy Case of an aged Saint among us, who was

† 1 John iii. 20, 21.

|| Phil. i. 21.

the last Night interred, whose Temper and Carriage in his private Station in the World was such, as gives us good Ground to hope, there was a Crown of Righteousness laid up for him *.

But what abundant Reason have we to think so, with Respect to the worthy and honourable, good and faithful PRESIDENT of the College; who has lately taken his Departure from us by Death?

His Life and Conversation from his Youth up, have been a constant Testimony for him, to all that knew him, of the excellent good Dispositions of his Mind, and of the gracious Impressions upon his Heart from his tender Years. He like King Josiah, while he was yet young, began to seek and serve the God of his Fathers.

He was favoured with a liberal Education at the College, (over which he was afterwards called to preside): And when a Student there, he behaved himself with so much Inoffensiveness, Dutifulness, and Diligence, as not only to gain the Love and Good-Will of all, but their Respect and Esteem as a good Proficient in the Learning of *that Day*.

Since which he has been imploying his natural and acquired Accomplishments, with a Diligence, Constancy and Fidelity, that was uncommon.

But few Men had more useful Talents, or Accomplishments better fitted for doing Service in the World, than he.

He had a calm and moderate Temper, and had a great Government of his Passions; but with all, had strong and steady Spirits, which would prompt him to undertake, and would carry him through many difficult Labours, without Fainting or giving

* Mr. John Dickson.

over. He was very meek and peaceable, humble, condescending and familiar to all. He was not of a hasty Spirit, that would precipitate him to any rash or unadvised Actions; but in all Affairs, especially those that were difficult and doubtful, he acted with great Caution.

And altho' where his Conscience was concerned, (which he always appeared to be under the Government of,) he would steddily and courageously abide by the Dictates thereof, whether he pleased or displeased Men; for this was his governing Principle, to manage in all his Affairs, not as pleasing Men but God, that trieth the Hearts.

And yet in other Cases, no Man more careful not to displease or offend. Accordingly in his Discourses, whether private or publick, he for the most part avoided controversial Points, and Matters of doubtful Disputation; choosing rather to press those practical Duties that were not disputed, than spend his Time in speculative Controversies. He was a Lover, and a Counsellor of Peace; and studied the Things that made for Peace, and whereby one might edify another.

He spent about *thirty Years* of his Life in the publick Ministry at *Boston*, where he was happy in the hearty Love and Respects of his People; and where he diligently, and I believe successfully laid himself out for the good of Souls, in his pastoral Visits, as well as in his publick Preaching; and shewed himself a Pattern of good Works, readily distributing the Tenth of all his Income to pious and charitable Uses, whereby he could with greater Courage and Confidence call upon others for their Charities; and did by his own Example provoke them to Love and to good Works.

Furthermore, He endeavoured that his publick Ministry should be of more extensive Service; by

the many Sermons, and other Discourses which he published ; in all of which he used great Plainness of Speech, level'd to the lowest Capacities, more ambitious to instruct and quicken others, than to gain Applause to himself ; in which Writings, altho' he be dead, yet he speaks to us ; and as they have been, so I doubt not, but that they will be a Guide and Comfort to many Souls.

It is now almost *twelve Tears* since he was chosen into the Presidentship, and accepted the Care and Burden of that important Office ; not for the Honour, or the Profit of the Place ; but as he has often declared, from a self-denying Spirit, and in Obedience to what he apprehended to be the Call of God unto him.

And as he came hither for the Good of the College ; so he laid himself out very diligently, and laboriously for that End ; endeavouring to train up the Youth in such a Way, as he apprehended would render them most Serviceable in their Day ; being concerned to rectify their Morals, to reform their Disorders ; and to promote true Substantial Piety, as well as the most useful Learning, among them.

And altho' he has for the greatest Part of his Presidentship been afflicted and sore broken ; yet it has been wonderful to us all, to observe, not only with what Patience he endured his Pains ; (which for Years together, except when in Bed, were almost constant upon him.) But with what Diligence and Care he applied himself to the Business of the College, under so much bodily Weakness. For altho' this Weakness grew upon him, yet he held out, in the constant Service of his Place, even almost unto the very last. So that I have often thought, that many other Men, for the same Degree of Pain and Weakness, would keep their Chamber, if not their Bed ; when he would

go forth to College, and carry on the Worship of the Hall.

In a Word, and to sum up all; He was one of the brightest Examples of Diligence, Constancy and Fidelity.

And when he apprehended his Departure to be at Hand, he was in the same happy Frame with the blessed Apostle. He had his Conscience witnessing for him, that he *had fought the good Fight, finished his Course, and kept the Faith*; which gave him a Calm and Quietness of Mind; yea, and filled him with joyful Expectations of a Crown of Righteousness; and with admiring and adoring Thankfulness to God, for his abundant Mercy through Christ, in begetting such lively Hopes within him; telling me at one Time, how deeply and frequently he was affected with those Words of the Apostle, 1 Peter i. 3,--- 9. saying, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant Mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead, to an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away reserved, in Heaven for you, &c.*

And now, who is there that has seen & known his Manner of Life among us, his Doctrine, Purpose, Long-suffering, Charity, Patience, and are Witnesses how *holily, justly & unblameably* he behaved himself; that can possibly doubt of there being a Crown of Glory laid up for him? If we may judge of the Tree by its Fruit, we must thus judge of him: He was a good and holy Man; for he had his *Fruit unto Holiness, & the End is eternal Life*. He is gone, with the Apostle, to be with Christ for the present, and his Rest is glorious in him; and there is undoubtedly

doubtedly a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will give him, at the Day of his Appearing.

And now what remains, but that we duly resent this bereaving Stroke of divine Providence, and make a wise Improvement of it?

And in a particular Manner, let the *College* be deeply affected with the Breach that God in his holy and sovereign Providence has made upon it.

May *Those* who have the *immediate Instruction and Government of that Society*, be excited and quickened to be more and more imitating their Master that is taken from their Head, in Diligence, Constancy and Fidelity; aspiring after a double Portion of that good Spirit that was in him.

And may the *Students*, the Sons of the Prophets, call to mind the solemn, earnest and affectionate Counsels, Exhortations and Warnings, that you have heard from his Mouth; and may his Prayers and Tears upon your Account, which you have seen and heard, come into your more serious Remembrance. And let the bright Example of shining but unaffected Piety and Goodness, be ever before you as a Pattern to follow.

May the bereaved *Family* be supported under this heavy Loss, and have it sanctify'd unto them. May the *Widow* have the Consolations of God which are not small, and rejoyce in having the Lord her Maker for her Husband.

May

May the *Servants* of the House, so remember the Counsels and Warnings of their deceased Master, as to approve themselves the *Servants* of Jesus Christ.

May *mourning Friends and Relatives* be comforted to think of the happy Exchange it has proved to him.

May the *Poor* of this Place, and elsewhere, who have been relieved and refreshed by his Charities; be duly affected with the Loss of such a kind Benefactor; and be pleased with the Thought, that by his Acts of Piety and Charity, he has made to himself Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness, that now receive him into everlasting Habitations.

And may *all of us in the Neighbourhood*, be suitably affected with the Loss of so good a Neighbour, such a faithful Friend, and Father.

And may the *whole Town* mourn the Loss of this and other Saints, and Servants of Jesus Christ; and when our Glory is thinning after such a Manner, may we cry unto God, as in Psalm xii. 1. *Help, Lord, for the godly Man ceaseth; and the faithful fail from among the Children of Men.*

Finally, Let us earnestly pray for the plentiful Out-pourings of the divine Spirit upon those of us that survive; that the Breaches may be repaired, and their Ground made good who have gone off the Stage. Let us be Imitators of them who are gone before in all that was Good and Excellent; and especially, let us aspire after the same Mind,
and

and Spirit that was in Christ. And as the Apostle advises, with whose Words, I now conclude, Heb, 12. That ye be not slothful, but Followers of them who through Faith and Patience, inherit the Promises,

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